

REMEMBERING SEAN O'SHEA

Madam President, on a separate topic, I want to talk about a friend of mine who just passed away. He was a selfless son of Chicago who did a lot of good for a lot of people.

Sean O'Shea was a political science major at DePaul University in Chicago when he was chosen to intern in the White House Office of Cabinet Affairs under President Clinton.

Mitch Dudek recently wrote a beautiful obituary in the Chicago Sun-Times. The first line reads:

Sean O'Shea had an endearing quality that, combined with grit and chutzpah, served as a lock-picking device of sorts on doors leading from his South Side home all the way to the White House.

Kris Balderston, who was Sean's first boss in the White House, recalled his first impressions. I will substitute some of the more colorful language.

He said:

I'm not exaggerating. The guy walked in our office and I think within the first day we were like, "Who the [bleep] is this kid?" He was amazing.

He totally stood out from every intern we ever had. He was like "mentorship? I know what I'm doing here," and he wasn't kidding. People would ask, "How old is he?" And I'd tell them, "You don't want to know."

He was the son of Irish immigrants and didn't know anyone. And he was just funny and personal and a real doer.

And everyone in the White House, from the President and Mrs. Clinton on down, fell in love with Sean O'Shea. Sean made such an impression that after he graduated, he was offered a full-time job as a liaison between the White House and several Cabinet Agencies. He was then in his early twenties.

After the White House, Sean served as top aide to Senator Hillary Clinton and handled domestic appropriations bills, transportation and infrastructure. He was an adviser on the Northern Ireland peace process.

He then went back home to Illinois to serve as deputy chief of staff to former Governor Pat Quinn, overseeing tens of billions of dollars in transportation and other capital improvement projects. He also helped pass marriage equality in my State of Illinois.

In hindsight, maybe Sean packed so much into such a short span because he would not be given the gift of a long life. He passed away last month of brain cancer at the age of 46.

Sean Francis Patrick O'Shea grew up on the South Side of Chicago, the youngest of Joe and Mary O'Shea's four kids. His parents were both born in Ireland, and they met at a dance in Chicago. Like many immigrant parents, Joe and Mary taught their kids to be proud of their heritage and to be grateful they were Americans. Sean's dad worked for the Chicago water department as an operating engineer. His mom worked in the Office of the Cook County Assessor.

Joe O'Shea was an accordion player and past president of the Chicago chapter of the Irish Musicians Association—God bless him—who insisted that all

four of their children learn Irish dancing.

One of Joe's proudest moments was in 2000, when Sean was asked if he could recommend any Irish musicians from Chicago to play at President Clinton's final St. Patrick's Day in the White House. Sean put in a plug for his dad and some dancers from the Irish dance school he attended in Chicago. He and his sister were able to watch as their dad played for the President and First Lady.

Sean also was that rare South Sider who was a Chicago Cubs fan, which is a big deal in Chicago. He was a regular at Cubs spring training in Arizona with his friends from WGN television and radio. He never missed the big game, which ranged from opening day to game 7 of the World Series, to any random Tuesday when the Cubs were well out of playoff contention. He loved the sport, the Cubs, and Wrigley Field, and to experience those days with his family and friends.

Sean was incredibly proud to have helped make Kerry Wood Cubs Field—which has given countless Chicago children the chance to play baseball—a reality during his time in the Governor's office.

He also loved people. Sean's husband Sebastian said they could go into a restaurant or bar where neither of them knew anyone, and by the time they left, Sean knew everyone and had the phone numbers of 10 new friends in his pocket. As one of Sean's friends said, "He left every room better than when he came in."

But what Sean loved most of all was helping others. He was a good, honorable man who believed that government could make life better for people and that public service was a privilege. He could often be heard saying, "How can I help?" He had a tremendous impact on the lives of people in Chicago, in Illinois, across America, and beyond. His contributions will make a difference for years to come, and he will be deeply missed.

Sean's funeral mass was held at Old St. Pat's Parish Church in Chicago. The church was filled with hundreds of floral arrangements and packed with his friends and countless people whose lives he touched. The last song they played, of course, was an Irish tune called "The Parting Glass." It is about a man who is leaving his friends behind. It includes the lines:

Come fill to me the parting glass. Good night and joy be with you all.

That is how Sean would want to be remembered—as a good man who used his short time on Earth to make the world better and bring joy to so many people.

Loretta and I send our deepest condolences to Sean's husband Sebastian Contreras, Jr.; his mother Mary; his siblings, Michael, Daniel, and Colleen; his niece and nephew, Declan and Delaney; and to Sean's friends—too numerous to count. May you find comfort in your memories.

DREAM ACT

Madam President, they say to me, to be an effective Senator, you have to be patient, but what I am about to describe tests that theory.

It has been 22 years since I introduced the DREAM Act.

The best chance we ever had to pass it came to mind as I listened to the Republican leader a few minutes ago talking about the horrors of fentanyl and drugs that are crossing our borders and recount the numbers of people who are showing up at our borders as well. It brought back my memory of something called the Gang of 8—four Democrats and four Republicans—including John McCain, LINDSEY GRAHAM, Senator Flake, Senator RUBIO, Senator SCHUMER, Senator BENNET of Colorado, Senator MENENDEZ, and myself. We worked for almost a year to put together a comprehensive immigration reform that was long overdue. It included border security at a level unseen in America ever. We were prepared to invest billions of dollars to make our border safe.

We passed this bill with, I think, 68 votes here on the floor of the Senate. I thought, finally, after 30 years of talking about immigration and batting it back and forth between Democrats and Republicans, we are finally going to do something on a bipartisan basis. We took that measure and sent it over to the Republican-led House of Representatives. They refused to even consider it—refused to consider it.

So when I hear concerns and complaints today that our border just isn't safe enough, I agree. But I ask those who are complaining: Where were you when we brought this bipartisan measure to the floor, which had so much enforcement in it and really would have given us a safer situation today and for years to come?

We can do that again.

I agree completely with Senator MCCONNELL that the drug crisis in America is serious, not just in Kentucky but in my State of Illinois and in yours, too, and all across this Nation. I also understand that there are too many people presenting themselves at the border believing they are going to somehow find their way into this country.

I have met with many of them who were brought on buses to the city of Chicago. You should hear their stories. These are not people who are out trying to deceive the system or cheat the laws of America. They are desperate people—desperate for the safety of themselves and their children, desperate for an opportunity to have hope and a future.

You sit down with them and think: How could they be much different than my mother, who was an immigrant to this country at the age of 2? She came here with her family looking for a better life. She found it, and because she found it, I did too.

That story is the story of America. Immigration is the story of America.

The notion that some Republicans have that we will not accept one more immigrant is ridiculous and it is un-American, and it doesn't reflect the reality of the country we live in.

Twenty-two years ago, I heard a story about a young lady, a woman, in the city of Chicago. She was from Korea. Her name was Tereza Lee. She came here on a visitor's visa, overstayed the visa, and was technically undocumented, illegal in the eyes of the law.

Well, her father wanted to have a church. He wanted to be a Korean pastor of a church in Chicago. He never quite realized his dream, but he visited a lot of churches and dragged along his little daughter with him. While he was talking things over with pastors of these churches about what he might do, she would wander around the church and eventually get to the piano and sit down and start banging away at the keys.

She wasn't very good to start with, but there was some promise there. She became part of the Merit School of Music program in Chicago. This is a program which is remarkable. A lady left a lot of money and said: Use that money to train kids in public schools to play musical instruments.

Tereza Lee was one of those kids. She learned how to play the piano and became one of the best.

The day came when she was finally urged to take a chance and apply for music school, and she did. She got to one of the questions on the application, out of high school, and the question was: What is your citizenship status.

She said to her mother: What is it?

Her mom said: We never filed any papers. I don't know.

She said: What are we going to do?

They said: We are going to call DUBIN.

So they called my office and got in touch with Claris Duque, who is my chief of staff and who was working on those cases at the time, and we checked the law.

For this 18-year-old girl, the law was clear. She was illegal in America, and she had to leave for 10 years and then apply to come back in. It didn't seem right. She didn't make the decision to come to this country; her parents did. She did everything right once she got here and struggled with a family who didn't have a lot of money but managed to scrape by.

Here she was, asking for a chance to continue her education from Chicago Public Schools to music school that might make a difference in her life. She was being told officially by the government: No, thanks.

That is when I decided to introduce a bill called the DREAM Act, 22 years ago. For more than 20 years now, hundreds of thousands of young people in this country have been waiting for Congress to pass this bill. I have been waiting too. Along the way, there have been some victories and some major setbacks, but through it all, one thing

has remained steady and constant: the devotion of Dreamers to this country.

Dreamers have woven themselves into the fabric of America. Many of them were brought here as babies. They grew up alongside other kids—our kids. They pledged allegiance to the same American flag that we all do, and they did it in classrooms day after day.

Over the past 22 years, Dreamers have given everything they can to America, again and again. They have served our Nation as doctors, teachers, members of the military, and other essential roles that have helped move America forward. That is why last week, I reintroduced the Dream Act, for what I hope is the final time and we can see its passage.

I want to thank one person in particular, Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM. He has joined me again and again as my Republican cosponsor of this measure. I can never thank him enough.

This legislation will finally provide permanent protections to every Dreamer who has grown up in America and earned their path to citizenship.

More than 800,000 Dreamers have received protection from Obama's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program, known as DACA. The President initiated that in 2012. That is quite a few years ago now. It was never meant to be a permanent solution. It was supposed to be a bridge until Congress finally acted on immigration.

We are still waiting. What is more, there are thousands of other Dreamers who can never have the chance to apply for DACA protection. Instead, they have to be forced to remain in the shadows.

Let me show you two to demonstrate this story. This is Karen and Judith, twin sisters. Theirs is the 132nd and 133rd Dreamer story I have told on the Senate floor. That is a lot.

Karen and Judith were born in Durango, Mexico. They arrived in the United States when they were 2 years old, the same age as my mom when she came here as an immigrant. Their family settled down in Dallas. Growing up, their parents were loving and supportive.

Karen and Judith faced some obstacles because they were undocumented. For instance, they didn't have health insurance, which meant doctor and dental appointments were reserved only for emergencies. By the time Karen and Judith reached high school, it became clear they would not be given the same opportunities as the kids they went to school with. They could only watch from afar as their friends got their drivers' licenses, traveled outside the country, and landed their first jobs.

Karen and Judith were not in that category. They were undocumented. But despite their frustrations, they pushed onward. Let me tell you what happened.

In addition to graduating salutatorian and valedictorian, Karen and Judith became Junior ROTC Academic

Bowl national qualifiers, AP Scholars with Distinction, National Hispanic Scholars, National Honor Society inductees, and so much more. Really, their academic accomplishments I can't even start to list, but because of their immigration status, Karen and Judith could not apply for financial aid or scholarships at the colleges at the top of their lists.

So upon graduating high school, they stayed close to home, where the two of them are currently attending Texas A&M. After they earn their degrees, both of them hope to pursue their careers in medicine.

Do we need more medical professionals? The question answers itself.

But for now, in their spare time, both sisters give back to their community when they can. Karen tutors schoolkids and provides in-home care for seniors, while Judith volunteers at a local hospital, as well as an interfaith immigration network.

Really, that should be the end of their story for now, but it is not. You see, a couple of years ago, Karen and Judith's paths diverged—twins though they may be—not by choice but because of our broken immigration system.

What do I mean? In 2020, Karen and Judith submitted their applications for DACA, but they did so 1 day apart. A year or so later, Karen's application was approved. But before Judith even received a reply to her application filed 1 day later, a Federal judge in Texas, Judge Hanen, decided to hit the brakes for the DACA Program. He ruled that the USCIS could not approve any DACA applications after his decision.

Judith has been living in limbo ever since that decision was handed down. She cannot legally work, and she has no idea what her future holds.

Ask yourself a simple question: Would America be better if these two sisters were deported back to Durango, Mexico? Would it be any better if Karen and Judith are sent to a country they don't even remember? What about the more than 200,000 DACA recipients who worked on the frontlines of this pandemic—doctors, nurses, paramedics—would America be better without them?

Of course not. We need Dreamers like Karen and Judith, and this Congress needs to do something to protect them.

Think about this for a moment. Karen and Judith weren't even alive when I first introduced the Dream Act in 2001. While they have grown up and gone on to change their lives, Congress stood still and did not fix a broken immigration system.

Even DACA, a temporary solution for Dreamers like Karen and Judith, endured one bad-faith attack after another. Republican Governors like Texas's Greg Abbott have led a relentless campaign to eliminate DACA and deport these two young women and disrupt the lives of hundreds of thousands of Dreamers in America.

Last October, the Fifth Circuit issued a ruling on DACA. The court kept protections in place for now for current recipients but sent the case back to the judge in Texas who has repeatedly ruled against the program—the same Judge Hanen.

Just recently, nine Republican-led States asked that same judge to end DACA in their States all together. That would be a disaster for this country, not just in terms of the human costs but the economic costs and what it says about our values.

DACA recipients and their households pay more than \$5 billion in Federal taxes each year. That is money for repairing roads and bridges, Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.

By enacting the Dream Act, we will increase America's GDP by nearly \$800 billion over the next 10 years and create hundreds of thousands of jobs in the process.

The bottom line is we can point fingers at other people, but this ball is in our court, and there are other immigration issues we should address. As Senator MCCONNELL raised earlier, border security is one of them. We need to bring order to our Nation's border. We should never knowingly allow anyone dangerous to come or stay in this country, and we cannot absorb all the people in the world who want to become citizens or residents tomorrow. We have to have a thoughtful system that makes sense for America's future and our economy.

It is worth noting that President Biden has made some progress. Even with the limitations of a woefully outdated immigration legal system, the Biden administration has developed a more efficient process that is starting to make a difference. That new process has helped reduce the number of migrant crossings from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela by roughly 97 percent. It is progress.

But as I mentioned, Executive action can't get the job done on its own. Poll after poll shows that Americans of all stripes—liberal, conservative, Democrat, Republican, Independent—want Congress to do something instead of making speeches on the floor. In fact, one recent poll showed that an overwhelming majority of Americans—Democrats, Independents, and Republicans—support both protections for Dreamers and improving border security.

I want to put that in writing. We are going to put together a bill that addresses border security and the future of the Dream Act, and we need to do it soon. If we learned anything from last year's election, it is that America wants us to come together on a bipartisan basis to make our Nation stronger, safer, more prosperous, and really reflect the values of the American people. I can think of no better place to start than the Dream Act.

Let's work together to protect our brave young Dreamers from deportation and bring order to America's

southern border. There is no other option.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 10.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Ana C. Reyes, of the District of Columbia, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 10, Ana C. Reyes, of the District of Columbia, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Jack Reed, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Mark Kelly, Patty Murray, Tim Kaine, Jeff Merkley, Sheldon Whitehouse, Elizabeth Warren, Tammy Baldwin, Benjamin L. Cardin, Jeanne Shaheen, John W. Hickenlooper, Christopher Murphy, Brian Schatz, Debbie Stabenow, Alex Padilla.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 11.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Daniel J. Calabretta, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of California.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 11, Daniel J. Calabretta, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of California.

Charles E. Schumer, Richard J. Durbin, Jack Reed, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Mark Kelly, Patty Murray, Tim Kaine, Jeff Merkley, Sheldon Whitehouse, Elizabeth Warren, Tammy Baldwin, Benjamin L. Cardin, Jeanne Shaheen, John W. Hickenlooper, Christopher Murphy, Brian Schatz, Debbie Stabenow, Alex Padilla.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 1.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Lester Martinez-Lopez, of Florida, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 1, Lester